

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Office of the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer
OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Nantucket Sound Wampanoag Traditional Cultural Property

November 5, 2009

There is extensive archaeological, historical, and ethnographic information that supports the opinions of the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (Washington 2009) and the resolution of the Tribal Council of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (2009) that Nantucket Sound is a Traditional Cultural Property that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

It is the opinion of the Massachusetts SHPO that Nantucket Sound as a Wampanoag Traditional Cultural Property meets the Criteria of Eligibility (36 CFR Part 60) for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, C, and D at the local level of significance. The historical significance of Nantucket Sound relates to the Native American exploration and settlement of Cape Cod and the Islands and with the central events of the Wampanoag origin story of Maushop and Squant/Squannit (Criterion A); for its association with Maushop and Squant/Squannit (Criterion B); as a significant and distinguishable entity integral to Wampanoag folklife traditions, practices, cosmology, and religion (Criterion C); and, for the important information it has yielded and/or may be likely to yield through archaeology, history, and ethnography (Criterion D).

The following summary of this information is intended to highlight pertinent historical “patterns or trends” (National Register of Historic Places [NRHP] 1997a: 7) as historic contexts in order to apply the Criteria of Eligibility (36 C.F.R. Part 60). Evaluation for National Register eligibility does not require an exhaustive and comprehensive compendium of all available information, but rather, an “illustrative” summary to demonstrate that an historic property is “representative of its theme, place, and time” (NRHP 1997b: 39, 49).

Archaeological Data

Prior to ca. 6,000 years ago, Nantucket Sound was exposed land (Uchupi et al. 1996). Native groups would have occupied the exposed lands, and focused their gathering and hunting and

social activities near fresh water and estuarine settings that are now submerged under the waters of Nantucket Sound. The Pleistocene-Holocene geology of Nantucket Sound shows the area ice-free by about 18,000 calendar years ago, containing favorable environmental settings in transformation that provided abundant resources and opportunities for Paleoindian exploration and occupation (Poppe et al. 2008; Ridge 2003). The islands of Nantucket Sound and its shallow submerged features such as Horseshoe Shoal were once hills on a broad coastal plain called the Nantucket Shelf Region (Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies 2005). The geographical boundaries of Nantucket Sound have been established by the US Department of Commerce, Coast and Geodetic Survey (ibid.: 7, 16-17) as follows:

Nantucket Sound is defined as the roughly triangular area of continental shelf that lies between the southern shore of Cape Cod (between Monomoy and Mashpee), and the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.... Nantucket Sound constitutes a small, shallow marine basin whose edges are formed by the islands of Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and Monomoy, the submerged shoals associated with these islands, and by the Cape....At its western end, Nantucket Sound merges with Vineyard Sound [Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies 2005: 7].

The oral tradition of the Aquinnah Wampanoag (Washington 2009) that their ancestors “walked” to Noepe (Martha's Vineyard) is supported by the paleogeographic reconstruction (Dunford and O'Brien: 32) and plausible archaeological interpretations of particular routes used by Paleoindian bands (ibid.: 36). Evidence of the very earliest known explorers in New England dating to the Paleoindian period— presently estimated to have commenced about 13,000 calendar years ago—have been found on Martha's Vineyard (Mahlstedt 1987: 23), Nantucket (Pretola & Little 1988: 49), and Cape Cod (Dunford and O'Brien 1997: 26-36). The dearth of Paleoindian and Early Archaic sites in the now-terrestrial parts of the Cape Cod and Islands region, is considered by archaeologists to be explained in part by the submergence of formerly exposed land where the majority of the earlier sites were located (e.g., Braun 1974: 583; Dincauze & Mulholland 1977; Herbster 2009: 8; Thorbahn et al. 1980: 30). Elsewhere in the New England region, extinct Pleistocene fauna and artifacts dating to the Archaic period have been found accidentally by scallopers dragging the seabed (for examples of previous underwater discoveries in the region, see Bell 2009: 19 & op. cit.). The entire region would have been as intensively used as terrestrial coastal places were used in later periods. Accurate geological

information and modern technologies are now available to locate intact, submerged ancient period sites that survived the dynamic effects of submergence (Merwin et al. 2003).

A major scientific discovery in Nantucket Sound was made during archaeological survey for the Cape Wind Energy project and during previous geological studies (Robinson et al. 2003: 36; Robinson et al. 2004: 59-62; Robinson 2008: 22). Core samples detected submerged, ancient terrestrial soils with preserved wood, charcoal, plants, and seeds in intact contexts that survived the submergence of Nantucket Sound. Radiocarbon dating of these deposits yielded dates of 5,490 B.P., 6,470 B.P., and 10,100 B.P. The core samples from the Cape Wind Energy project survey were interpreted as evidence of an intact upland deciduous forest floor, a fresh or brackish water wetlands, and a shallow freshwater pond or swamp. These are precisely the kinds of ancient landforms and environmental settings where ancient Native American features and artifacts are expected to be found in Nantucket Sound. The discovery of intact, submerged ancient landscape under the waters of Nantucket Sound is historically confirming to the Tribes (Andrews-Maltais 2008; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe 2009; Washington 2009).

Survey results from Nantucket Sound demonstrate that Southern New England waters, and Nantucket Sound in particular, contain preserved landforms that have integrity, and a high likelihood of yielding important archaeological information. Submerged environments are likely to have preserved artifacts made of wood, plant material, leather, bone, and antler that are not typically preserved at terrestrial sites. Submerged sites have the potential to yield whole categories of ancient material culture that are usually absent from terrestrial sites. Nantucket Sound is likely to provide a more complete view of the range of technologies developed and refined by ancient Native Americans in New England, site selection, land use, and settlement patterns from the Paleoindian through the Archaic periods that New England archaeologists previously thought had probably been lost completely to the rising sea (Bell 2009: 19-21, 31 & op. cit.; Merwin et al. 2003; Stright 1986, 1990).

Ancient Native Americans in Southern New England relied considerably on marine resources and marine settings for subsistence, transportation, and for symbolic and ritual purposes (Bragdon 1996; Salwen 1978; Snow 1978; Strauss 1987; Willoughby 1935). The appearance by at least 7,500 years ago of specialized groundstone tools, particularly gouges, celts, axes, and adzes are considered to be evidence for *mushoon* (dugout canoe) manufacturing. Skin- and bark-on-frame boats were also used in this region (Bell 2009: 37 n4 & op. cit.; Salwen

1978: 163-164). Wampum produced from quahog shell was made for symbolic and ritual purposes, and was widely exchanged throughout the Northeast (Bragdon 1996: 97-98; Bragdon 2009: 104-105). Marine animals were rendered as effigies in stone objects (Willoughby 1935), whose forms, functions, and symbolism linked to cosmology and shamanistic practices, particularly those associated with water places (cf. Bragdon 1995). Graves were often placed in view of water. Ritual and religious activities are intensely focal in mortuary practices (Vitelli 2009).

Marine resources from Nantucket Sound were taken and used by both coastal and inland Native populations. Archaeological sites along the coasts, on the islands, and inland include habitation and resource processing areas. Many have prodigious amounts of preserved faunal remains of marine resources (fish, shellfish, marine mammals, waterfowl, crustaceans, turtles), and specialized gear and features, required for hunting, gathering, processing, cooking, and disposal. Distinctive and inventive Native technology traditions maintained for millennia include varieties of rock and wood fishing weirs; woven nets with notched or perforated rock sinkers, and animistic lures; traps; baskets; bone and antler fish hooks, harpoons, and projectile points; chipped and ground stone tools for capturing, cutting, gutting, scraping, pounding, and for boat making; wooden drying and cooking racks; pottery; and, pits and middens (see, e.g., Little & Schoeninger 1995; Ritchie 1969; Salwen 1978: 162; Snow 1978: 60, 65-67; Speck & Dexter 1948; Willoughby 1935; for particular excavated data, refer to Massachusetts Historical Commission 1978- index entries "Aquinnah," "Cape Cod and the Islands," Mashpee," etc., q.v.). Inland sites have understandably fewer quantities of preserved shell and bone from marine and coastal species, likely because fish and perishable shellfish meat were smoked or dried on the shore with the more archaeologically durable shells left behind, and also because faunal remains of any kind are usually not well preserved at inland sites. The presence of any marine resources at inland sites indicates connections and interrelationships of inland and coastal populations, and likely the cooperative and negotiated sharing of access to coastal and marine resource-gathering places (Mulholland 1988: 149-154).

In time, many species of land and marine plants and animals were displaced or became extinct, while other species moved into this region, all under the observation of the resident Native peoples. These changes could be protracted or at other times dramatically quick, noticeable within a person's lifetime and fixed in the social memory of the people. Ancient

Native American groups adapted to this ever-changing environment, as they transformed habitats and landscapes, moving ahead of sea level rise. As the habitable land area decreased with the rising ocean waters, and human population increased, social organization and certain social practices also changed creatively. Some retained their coastal orientation for recurrent settlement, subsistence, and for transportation. Native Americans adapted their tools and tool forms, and their gathering, hunting, and fishing techniques as plant and animal species became more or less available. Through intelligence, creativity, experimentation, and agency informed by their distinctive culture and “archive of knowledge” (Handsman 2008; Vitelli 2009) as “genealogies of practice” (Mills & Walker 2008), the Wampanoags affected and transformed the evolving geographic and ecological settings of Nantucket Sound as their homelands.

Bragdon (1999: 85) considered the innovative developments of politically complex social organizations distinctive to Southern New England. She postulated the presence of “chiefdoms” with “contingent” sedentism and despite popular conceptions, apparently without primary reliance upon maize agriculture in coastal places (Bragdon 1996; Chilton 2006; Mulholland 1988: 146; Stein 2007). She pointed to leading “factors” in these sociopolitical arrangements including “access to marine resources, particularly certain species of shellfish; [and] occupation of ‘edge’ environments, especially fresh and saltwater estuaries which provided the greatest variety and abundance of food sources” (Bragdon 1999: 85). Bradley (2005: 52-55 & op. cit.) provided a useful summary of the regional archaeological site data viewed as “an environmental and cultural network” oriented to marsh and estuarine settings (Bradley 2005: 52). The exceptionally diverse environmental setting of Nantucket Sound, with social networks allowing or limiting access to bordering coastal lands and wetlands and abundant marine and marine-dependent resources, were foremost factors that allowed the development of innovative, autonomous sociopolitical structures for the Wampanoag Nation.

Historical Data

The earlier written descriptions of the coastal inhabitants describe the use of coastal marine resources by resident Wampanoags (Mulholland 1988: 152; Ritchie 1969: 3-9; Salwen 1978). Wampanoags have regularly been involved in shellfishing, fishing and whaling for individual, family, and group subsistence and for commercial purposes in Nantucket Sound and throughout the Cape and Islands and Southeastern Massachusetts regions (Andrews 1985; McBride &

Cherau 1996; Speck & Dexter 1948). Transactions by Sachems recorded in 17th- and 18th-century Nantucket deeds include reserving rights to beached whales (Little & Andrews 1982). There were “Indian fishing houses” in Nantucket in the 18th century (Little 1981).

The Mashpee Wampanoag were, in the 17th century, sometimes referred to by the English colonists as the “South Sea Indians,” a geographic reference to Nantucket Sound (Barber 1841: 47; he spelled it “Marshpee”). Of Mashpee Barber (1841: 47-48) writes that the town

is bounded on the south by the ocean. It is well fitted for an Indian residence, being indented by two bays, and shoots into several necks or points of land. It is also watered by several streams and ponds. These, with the ocean, afford an abundant supply of fish of various kinds. ...Many of the Indians are employed in the whale fisheries, and they are said to make the first-rate whalers. In 1837, they built a small vessel...commanded by a capable, enterprising Indian. This vessel is employed in carrying their wood to Nantucket.

Wampanoags have long participated in the fishery and whaling industries, usually historically as skilled laborers, but also for personal and group sustenance. It has also been documented that there have been notable Wampanoags and other New England Indian men and women who historically achieved business successes in marine-dependent industries. The Mashpee Wampanoag advisor and educator, Ramona Peters (2006: 43 n1) writes that, “a majority of nineteenth-century Wampanoag men from Mashpee and Aquinnah participated in the whaling industry.” Mandell (2008), Nicholas (2002, 2005), Silverman (2001, 2005), and Vickers (1981, 1983, 1985) have intensively studied and documented social and economic organization of 17th, 18th, and 19th-century Native communities to seafaring and to the maritime setting of their homelands. Important whaling ports in the vicinity included Nantucket, New Bedford, Falmouth, and Wellfleet. Whale species were hunted in Nantucket Sound, and the waters of Nantucket Sound became familiarly associated with the historic whaling industry.

Laura Orleans (2000: 10, 23, 36-37) through the “Faces of Whaling” oral and documentary history project for the National Park Service recognized Wampanoag historical narratives still circulating about the whaling industry, focused on Amos Smalley (1877-1961). Smalley was an Aquinnah Wampanoag who harpooned a white whale in 1902 south of the Azores. Smalley (1957) recounted the event in a *Reader's Digest* article, was interviewed by several newspaper reporters, and appeared on a 1958 national television program. Smalley told the story to many Wampanoag directly. Smalley's feat has been remembered and retold by

descendants with parallels drawn to the Aquinnah Wampanoag character “Tashtego” from Herman Melville’s epic novel, *Moby-Dick* (Anonymous 2007; Gaillard 1998: 120; Kinney 2009: 197; Orleans 2000: 23, 36, 50; Peters 1987: 14; Simmons 1986: 232). Smalley’s dramatic story is an important part of Wampanoag history and of this area’s whaling history generally.

Orleans’ (2000: 23) history project interviewed Edith Andrews (an Aquinnah Wampanoag) and documented information about Smalley, and about her great-great-grandfather Amos Haskins (1816-1861), a Wampanoag whaling captain. Andrew’s great-grandfather, Samuel Haskins (born ca. 1840), manned a rescue boat that responded to the tragic 1884 wreck of the *City of Columbus* on Devil’s Bridge in Nantucket Sound. Orleans (2000: 9-10) indicates the potential for much more information about the role of Native Americans in the region’s historic maritime industry from additional oral, genealogical, and documentary sources (see also Aquinnah Cultural Center Inc. n.d. [ca. 2008]; Boston Children’s Museum n.d. [ca. 2004]; and, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) n.d. [ca. 2005] for additional examples of contemporary Wampanoag historical consciousness of these and related subjects documented from oral and written sources).

Mandell (2008: 165) notes that in the early 19th century “a few members of the [Aquinnah] tribe owned boats and fished near shore,” but by the mid-19th century there were increased economic opportunities from commercial and recreational marine fishing in Nantucket Sound. Both Mashpee and Aquinnah Wampanoags led and sustained tourists to their homelands, and were at the forefront of the mid-19th-century Cape Cod recreational tourism movement (ibid.: 131). “Gay Head’s location at the edge of the Elizabeth Islands and prime fishing grounds gave them an advantage” as increased urban markets for seafood also gave former whalers who bought fishing boats continued income (ibid.: 165). Wampanoags continue to derive income from guiding tourists to their fishing and scenic coastal places of Nantucket Sound, which are advantaged as opportunities for “teaching moments” to convey their folklife, history, and cosmology to their visitors. Marine fishing in Nantucket Sound and shellfishing at its shores were and continue to be vital parts of the sustenance and economic strategy for resident Wampanoags that “used the land and water in ways that combined old and new methods” (ibid.: 164).

Speck and Dexter’s (1948) ethnographic fieldwork in Mashpee and Gay Head obtained detailed historical information about traditional and modern marine practices, material culture,

foodways, and folklore spanning from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. A great variety of species were taken from Nantucket Sound and along its shores. Speck and Dexter (1948: 261-262, Figs. 1-3) described and illustrated Wampanoag artifacts made from horseshoe crabs: awls, needles, and a spear made from the tail; “lucky bones” made from the male’s chelicerae; and a basket fashioned from two horseshoe crab shells “tied together rim to rim”, likely the same kind of “handbaskets made of crabshells wrought together” observed in a Cape Cod *wetu* (wigwam) by the *Mayflower* explorers in 1620 (quoted in Handsman 2008: 169). By including archaeological, ethnographic, and historical and modern ecological data in their study, Speck and Dexter (1948) appreciated the continuities and changes in marine subsistence practices and methods.

Gertrude Haynes Aikens (Princess Evening Star) whose memory dated from the early 20th century said “South Mashpee [on Nantucket Sound] was the salt-water fishing and hunting place of the town.” She recollected Wampanoag women, men, and children quahogging, oystering, and eel fishing (Aiken[s] 1970: 19). Eel traps and eel pots were woven like baskets (Boston Children’s Museum, n.d. [ca. 2004]; Wolverton 2003: 350, 367 n37). The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography at Harvard University curates a Mashpee Wampanoag eel trap collected in 1917 (catalogue #17-16-10/87069).

Earl Mills, Sr. (Chief Flying Eagle) relates how his father, Ferdinand Wilson Mills taught him fishing techniques in Mashpee (Mills & Mann 2006: 36, 45). Mills writes that his father wore “a red felt hat just like his father [i.e., Mills’ paternal grandfather] did, and decorate[d] it with lures, shells, and feathers. That was his way of expressing his attachment to and his respect for nature. Whenever he went fishing, he would pin onto that hat several fishhooks” (ibid.: 36). Through his recollections, Mills conveys the importance of generational connections for raising children in traditional ways that instill an appreciation of Indian perspectives on the relationship of people to the natural world and the resources it provides to feed and sustain them. Even in his clothing, Mills’ father meaningfully signals his “Indianness,” conveys direct connections to Mills’ paternal grandfather, and expresses “attachment” and “respect” for the natural world, including its marine resources (cf. Patton 2007).

For the Aquinnah Wampanoag, as well, “Male relatives taught [boys] where to find the best fishing spots—*Wampanoag fishing spots*—like the shoals of Devil’s Bridge [in Nantucket Sound] or the waters just off Noman’s Land island” (Silverman 2005: 242, emphasis added).

Silverman (2005: 242-243) appreciated the generational training of both boys and girls in the “customs that supported the Wampanoags’ sense of peoplehood. The significance of these acts rested in elders bequeathing to younger generations specialized knowledge about living off Wampanoag land.”

In another book (Mills & Breen 2001: 72), Earl Mills, Sr. relates the vital connections of food gathering from land and “sacred waters.” Russell M. Peters (1992: 14, 15) explains the *appanaug* (“seafood cooking” or clambake) as a ceremonial event. Peters’ story features his then-12-year-old grandson Steven who learns traditional ways, including gathering clams at Popponesset Bay on Nantucket Sound, where Steven can sense his “ancestor’s presence.” Steven is taught by his grandfather who had “learned how to prepare an *appanaug* from his father, who had learned from his father before him. In turn...Steven would pass the tradition on to his own children.... ‘We’re carrying on a tradition that our ancestors gave us’ ” (Peters 1992: 13, 18). Mills’ (Mills & Breen 2001; Mills & Mann 2006) and Peters’ (1987, 1992) accounts exemplify how Wampanoag

practices and beliefs endow the experiences of hunting, trapping, gathering, collecting, and farming with richly elaborated social meaning. These activities are ways to ‘keep in touch’ with supernatural helpers. To seek and take food is to experience directly with the supernatural the kind of ‘demand exchange’ often conducted with human beings [Bragdon 1996: 196].

Bragdon (1996: 131-136) discovered that even Wampanoag metaphorical language reveals an interwoven cultural conception of food, eating, and occupation of lands, with an ethic of reciprocity and expectations of sustainability by what was offered by the land and sea and through the labors of their fellows.

On August 17, 2002, the Wampanoag Indigenous Program at Plimoth Plantation organized a *mushoon* trip between Vineyard Sound and Nantucket Sound, from Falmouth to Tashmoo (at Tisbury on Martha’s Vineyard), using two *mushoonash* made at the museum’s Wampanoag Homesite (Coombs 2004a; Peters 2002). Months of practice and preparation preceded the event, renewing traditional skills with traditional nautical technology. “[S]o people wouldn’t have to ply the waters on an empty stomach,” food was provided to the participants during their practice sessions, and an *appanaug* was held on Lobsterville Beach after the paddlers arrived on Martha’s Vineyard (Coombs 2004a).

It was a trip of very historic import as it happened within the ancestral Wampanoag homeland, and with Wampanoag people from several tribes: Aquinnah, Mashpee, and Manomet (Herring Pond). Other staff and community members of other nations joined us as well, including Micmac, Narragansett, and Pequot.... The trip is something we feel was meant to happen when it did.... It was a trip meant to happen. A circle completed [Coombs 2004a].

The voyage was timed to coincide with the annual Legends of Maushop Pageant held by the Aquinnah Wampanoag. Coombs' (2004a) and Peters' (2002) accounts convey that the experience for the participants was evocatively "mystical," "very spiritual," and "historic." Coombs (ibid.) wrote that the goal of the project "was to acknowledge the navigational prowess of our ancestors; to celebrate our traditional way of life which we understand to be viable and sustainable; and to remind us of our connection to our ancestors, the earth and waters, and our responsibility to them." When Coombs, an Aquinnah Wampanoag educator and historian, concluded that "it was indeed a day of mending the hoop," she invoked a conventional phrase that expresses sanctity of contemporary Native American community-building and renewal of connections through collaboration, cooperation, and mentoring by traditional cultural practices occurring within traditional homelands.

The modern Aquinnah Wampanoag shellfish hatchery, and development of a Mashpee hatchery, are promising examples of how autonomous Wampanoags can seek to achieve economic benefit by cooperatively fostering indigenous marine resources while negotiating the modern global economy and creatively adapting to regional and global climate change (Vosk 2008).

Nantucket Sound and its marine resources, then, provide the setting, source, and content for Wampanoag traditions, cosmology, and practices through foodways, material culture, mentoring, and historical narratives, including the most important origin story of the Wampanoag homelands.

Ethnographic Data

The events of the central origin story of the Wampanoag homelands take place in Nantucket Sound. Simmons (1986: 172-234) presents several sequent versions of the story of Maushop, his wife Squant (also known as Old Squant, Granny Squant, and Squannit as pronounced in Mashpee [Peters 1987: 66; Simmons 1986: 173], and both names spelled variously), and their

children. The story involves the giant Maushop who attempts to rescue Wampanoag children kidnapped from land and taken offshore by a huge bird. Maushop discovers Noepe (Martha's Vineyard) and creates Nantucket and other islands. He transforms Squant/Squannit into other islands or rocks. He drags his big toe across Nantucket Sound to separate the Elizabeth Islands or Noman's Land from Martha's Vineyard, and drops rocks in Nantucket Sound to create Devil's Bridge. Maushop transforms his children into whales. He sends or flings dead or dying whales ashore or cooks whales to feed his people. Details of the story explain how Maushop "withdrew" after the Europeans arrived—Silverman (2005: 33; cf. Simmons 1986: 175-176) says "The Wampanoags proffered differing accounts of Moshup's disappearance, but in [short] time [by 1787] many of them would point to his disgust at the arrival of Englishmen"—"leaving only indirect evidence of his presence" (Simmons 1986: 172). Landscape features and characteristics such as the multicolored, Miocene fossil-bearing clays at Gay Head that indeed have the appearance of "an immense archaeological midden" (Simmons 1986: 174) are considered to be the remains of Maushop's ancient cooking fires. Ocean fog from Nantucket Sound is said to be the smoke from Maushop's pipe. Granny Squant/Squannit is usually a fearsome character to be placated with gifts, or better avoided altogether, in stories told to children to discipline and control their behavior. Speck and Dexter (1948: 260) said that "One bivalve, the common jingle shell (*Anomia simplex*), played a part in local (Gay Head) Wampanoag fables and myths, in which the shells are referred to as 'Granny Squanit's toe nails.' These were doubtless used as toys for children because of their bright golden and silver colors and the jingle sounds which they make."

The earliest written version of the Maushop story was published in 1643, an "impressive historical pedigree" (Simmons 1986: 233, 295 n1) that indicates that the origin story has great antiquity. This story and its variants continue to be related by and among Mashpee and Aquinnah Wampanoag in modern times (e.g., Andrews-Maltais 2009; Anonymous 2007; Aquinnah Cultural Center Inc., n.d. [ca. 2008]; Bingham 1970: 22; Coombs 2004a; Manning & Eccher 2001; Peters 1987: 66; Silverman 2005: 33 n68; Simmons 1986: 220-233; Simmons 1992: 323-325), demonstrating the continued *central* cultural significance of the story's maritime-related themes and symbolism linked to cultural identity and place, what Crosby (1993) characterizes as a "spiritual landscape." Simmons (1986: 234, emphasis added) recognizes that "the [Maushop-

Squant/Squannit] legends *still convey* a self-contained magical world where the ancestors, landscape, weather, sounds, and sea creatures are alive in distinctly Indian ways.”

Christie (2009) more generally explains that, “In conventional anthropological literature, ‘landscape’ is the term applied to the meaning local people bestow on their cultural and physical surroundings.” Christie wrote that “Landscape is a powerful factor in the operation of memory because of the associations narrators make between the local landscape and the events of the stories they tell. Ancestors and mythological events often become fixed in a specific landscape and act as timeless reference points” (Christie 2009). The theoretical, anthropological issues of historical *and contemporary* New England Indian identity created through “history,” “memory” and “landscapes” as ancestral homelands are considered in recent, current, and developing research by Bragdon (1992, 2009), Bruchac (2005), Coombs (2004b), Handsman (1991, 2008), Handsman and Lamb Richmond (1995), Lightfoot (2008), Mandell (2008), Mills and Walker (2008), Paynter (2002), Robinson (2000), Silliman (2009) and Vitelli (2009) among others. While these theoretical approaches to archaeological, historical, and ethnographic data to conceptualize historical and contemporary Native special places within homelands are chiefly of interest to anthropologists, these contemporary anthropological interpretive approaches are relevant to the consideration of spaces and places as “Traditional Cultural Properties” as conceived by Parker and King (1998) in *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*.

The very meaning of “Wampanoag” rendered in English as the phrase “People of the First Light or Dawn” refers to their relationship to Nantucket Sound as integral to their homelands, their history, their present, and their future. The evocative phrase “People of the First Light” is like a “tiny imagist poem” (Edward Sapir, quoted in Bragdon 1996: 135) packed with meaning. The word “Wampanoag” is both temporally literal—they have always been/are/will be the first people to see the sunrise over the water—and symbolically referential: they are *of* the place, it is how they identify themselves and how others know them. The Tribes have provided documentation about the religious qualities and characteristics of Nantucket Sound. The Tribes have referred to their cultural identity and to their religious practices as dependent on their reverential viewsheds of Nantucket Sound. These qualities and characteristics to the Wampanoag are also in their contemporaneity, history, folklife traditions, and cosmology. These define their identity as a people, embody their settled place in the region, and have historical, cosmological,

and religious meanings to them. For the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and to other Indian Nations as invited visitors to ceremonial events, Nantucket Sound is a central and important locale for their folkways. The Wampanoag people value Nantucket Sound as integral to their culturally rich, multidimensional folklife for its symbolic and religious qualities, and because marine resources play an important role in the training of generations in the continuation of their material culture, foodways, practices, cosmology, and narrative traditions.

Evaluation Considerations

The Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) recognizes that in addition to the “Criteria Consideration” for religious properties (36 C.F.R. Part 60), the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP 1997a: 5) also “[g]enerally...excludes from the definition of ‘site’ natural waterways or bodies of water that served as determinants in the location of communities or were significant in the locality’s subsequent economic development. While they may have been ‘avenues of exploration,’ the features most appropriate to document this significance are the properties built in association with the waterways.” This guideline is actually a minor point in a longer discussion about the definition of “site” for the purposes of considering if a “property type” is National Register-eligible. The meaning of “natural” is intended to contrast artificial waterways and water bodies such as historic canals, aqueducts and constructed reservoirs.

Although there is no specific exclusionary language about waterways and water bodies for National Register consideration in the regulations (36 C.F.R. Part 60) or the law (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), practitioners of the evaluation process apply this guideline to the particular historic contexts documented for specific historic properties (NRHP 1997a; Parker & King 1998). A Traditional Cultural Property is a special historic “property type.” This general guideline to exclude natural waterways and water bodies, and the religious property consideration, *does not apply* to Traditional Cultural Properties “with sound documentation...of historical or cultural significance” (Parker & King 1998: 11; see also, *ibid.*: 14, 20; see also NRHP 1997a: 27).

Nevertheless, the significant historical qualities and characteristics of Nantucket Sound as an historic property per se—and not also as a Traditional Cultural Property with the sound documentation summarized here—are not limited to the specific exclusionary categories of the guideline. It is the opinion of the Massachusetts SHPO that none of the exclusionary criteria

considerations and evaluation issues outlined in the law, regulations, and guidance documents is pertinent to Nantucket Sound as a Traditional Cultural Property.

As to the Criteria Consideration for Nantucket Sound as a religious property—affirmed by the Tribes and documented through scholarship—the National Register guidance documents provide considerable explanation as to why this exclusion *does not apply* to historical Traditional Cultural Properties and to those religious properties and traditions “having secular scholarly recognition” (NRHP 1997a: 26-28; Parker & King 1998: 1, 2, 3, 5, 14-15):

Application of this criteria consideration to traditional cultural properties is fraught with the potential for ethnocentrism and discrimination. In many traditional societies, including most American Indian societies, the clear distinction made by Euroamerican society between religion and the rest of culture does not exist. As a result, properties that have traditional cultural significance are regularly discussed by those who value them in terms that have religious connotations [Parker & King 1998: 14].

In simplest terms, the fact that a property is used for religious purposes by a traditional group, such as seeking supernatural visions, collecting or preparing native medicines, or carrying out ceremonies, or is described by the group in terms that are classified by the outside observer as “religious” should not by itself be taken to make the property ineligible, since these activities may be expressions of traditional cultural beliefs and may be intrinsic to the continuation of traditional cultural practices [ibid.: 15].

The Section 106 regulations provide explicit direction to federal agencies to evaluate properties that have religious significance to Native American tribes: “The agency official *shall acknowledge* that Indian tribes...possess special expertise in assessing the eligibility of historic properties that may possess religious and cultural significance to them” (36 C.F.R. 800.4(c)(1), emphasis added). The Tribes have provided documentation about the religious qualities and characteristics of Nantucket Sound. The religious beliefs and practices of the Wampanoag are the subjects of an enormous body of recognized secular scholarship well known to regional archaeologists, ethnohistorians, and ethnographers (e.g., Bragdon 1996, 2009; Silverman 2003, 2005; Simmons 1981; Vitelli 2009; & op. cit.).

Conclusion

The identity and culture of the indigenous Wampanoag are inextricably linked to Nantucket Sound. The long archaeological and historical record of dependence upon marine resources and

the ocean setting are well documented, with many illustrative historical and contemporary examples of the specific use of Nantucket Sound by the Wampanoag. Many more examples are documented in the references cited, and additional archaeological, historical, and ethnographic research could locate even more specific examples about these “Native maritime tribes” (Mandell 2008: 165). Their folklife of traditional practices, symbolism, material culture, foodways, mentoring, and narratives are sourced from and shaped by their relationship to Nantucket Sound. The traditional cultural significance of Nantucket Sound as an historical, symbolic, and sacred central place to the Wampanoag is supported by the opinions of the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the resolution of the Tribal Council of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; by contemporary Wampanoag historical consciousness of important persons, places, and events in recorded oral and written narratives; and by scholars in ethnohistory. Nantucket Sound is a Traditional Cultural Property that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance.

In the Massachusetts SHPO’s opinion, Nantucket Sound as a Traditional Cultural Property is a “site” that has integrity of “relationship” and “condition” (Parker & King 1998: 11-12) including location, setting, materials, feeling, and association. It meets Criterion A for its associations with the ancient and historical period Native American exploration and settlement of Cape Cod and the Islands, and with the central events of the Wampanoag origin story of Maushop and Squant/Squannit; Criterion B for its association with Maushop and Squant/Squannit; Criterion C as a significant and distinguishable entity integral to Wampanoag folklife traditions, practices, cosmology, religion, material culture, foodways, mentoring, and narratives; and, Criterion D for the important cultural, historical, and scientific information it has yielded and/or may be likely to yield through archaeology, history, and ethnography about the nature, timing, and changes of occupation, settlement, and land use prior to 6,000 years ago and after as a result of ocean submergence, about maritime resource use and technologies, about sociopolitical adaptations and innovations related to maritime resource acquisition and access sharing and/or resource exchange, about cultural practices and traditions of the Native Americans of Cape Cod and the Islands in relationship with other peoples in ancient and historical times, and about transformations brought about by European exploration, American settlement, and marine resource exploitation within Wampanoag homelands.

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